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KU Libraries items in Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit

The University of Kansas Libraries will play a key role in the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition at Union Station in Kansas City, Mo., beginning Feb. 8. A trio of items from the Department of Special Collections in KU's Kenneth Spencer Research Library will be featured alongside 10 scrolls, some of which have never been seen before in the United States.

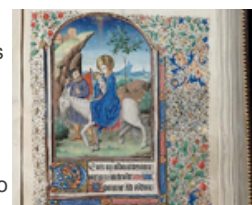
The Dead Sea Scrolls date back to before biblical times and include some of the earliest surviving texts that went on to form the books of the Hebrew Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament.



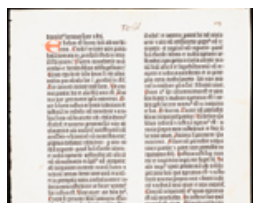
"The exhibition highlights the rich depth of our unique and rare collections at the University of Kansas Libraries," said Lorraine Haricombe, dean of libraries at KU. "It also reinforces our strong commitment to preserve the human record in perpetuity."

The KU pieces in the exhibit will include a manuscript of the "**Aurora**" by Peter Riga, circa 1205. Riga's masterwork, the "Aurora" was a versification of the principal books of the Bible. Verses added by Egidius of Paris after Riga's death are visible in the manuscript.

Also joining the exhibition is "**The Vosper Hours**" from Langres, France, circa 1450-1475. A Book of Hours is a compendium of prayers and devotional texts. It is strictly a work of private devotion owned by a layperson and was not a part of the public liturgy. The identity of the individual who commissioned the book is unknown. This copy honors the late Robert Vosper, Director of Libraries at KU in the 1950s.



A leaf from the **Gutenberg Bible** from Mainz, Germany, dated to 1455 is KU's third contribution to the exhibit. The piece came from a fragmentary copy that was broken up and offered for sale in 1953. It was originally from a copy that resided in the abbey of St. Maximin in Trier, Germany.



"It was through a serendipitous chance that the organizers of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibition came to KU to find the original manuscripts and books needed to finalize the exhibition," said Richard W. Clement, who heads the Libraries' special collections. "A current student in the Museum Studies program, who also works at Union Station, had taken a class in Spencer Library and alerted the curators of the exhibition to the wealth of rare materials here at KU. We were able to offer them a considerable range of items to use in the final section of the exhibition."

The exhibit was developed in conjunction with the Israel Antiquities Authority, and Kansas City is its only Midwest stop. Tickets for the exhibit are on sale now and available by calling (816) 460-2020. The exhibit runs through May 13.

For more information, contact Rebecca Smith, KU Libraries PR and development director, at rasmith@ku.edu or 785.864.1761

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